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LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD:

THE PETITE SINGERIE OF

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

CHANTILLY

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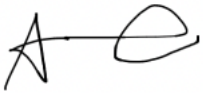

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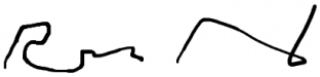

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LIVING IN A MATERIAL WORLD

THE PETITE SINGERIE OF

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY

CHANTILLY

A Thesis Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the

Meadows School of Arts

Southern Methodist University

in

Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

with a

Major in Art History

by

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May 14, 2022

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Living in a Material World:
The Petite Singerie of
Eighteenth-Century
Chantilly

Advisor: Amy Freund

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From 1735 to 1737, French artist Christophe Huet painted a series of wooden panels in a boudoir utilized by Caroline de Hesse-Rheinfels, the Duchesse de Bourbon, at the estate known as Chantilly. This thesis analyzes the messages posed by said space, exploring the complex narratives propagated by its paintings and decorative scheme as insights into a particular aristocratic milieu. Throughout the immersive boudoir, Huet utilized the *singerie* motif—through which monkeys caricatured human dress and pursuits—cementing the room's nickname as the Petite Singerie. Despite the artist's incorporation of these satirical monkey figures, the paintings of the Petite Singerie functioned as inventories of the material environments that shaped eighteenth-century France, specifically within the country estate of the Bourbon Condé.

Yet within the boudoir, the Duchesse de Bourbon encountered her own image alongside Huet's paintings, as her reflection was displayed within three mirrors hanging in the space. Considering the Duchesse de Bourbon's bodily navigation of the room in its daily usage, this study suggests that the Petite Singerie incorporated the Duchess within its decorative scheme. Thus, I argue that the boudoir not only cataloged the pastimes of a generalized French aristocracy, but specifically located Caroline de Hesse-Rheinfels, a foreign-born, German noble, within their ranks at

Chantilly. Through its architectural and decorative design, the Petite Singerie by Christophe Huet thereby correlated the Duchesse de Bourbon to the monkey figures and material goods dispersed throughout the paintings of her boudoir.

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INTRODUCTION

A Private Space for the Duchesse de Bourbon

On July 29th, 1728, Marie-Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels-Rottenburg (1714-1740), arrived at the country estate of Chantilly as the newly christened Duchesse de Bourbon.[1] The palatial retreat was the land of French royal cousins in the Bourbon Condé line, situated approximately forty-five miles northeast of the royal court in Versailles and thirty-five miles north of the city of Paris. By de Hesse-Rheinfels' arrival at Chantilly, expansive reconstruction projects were well underway across the grounds, prompted by the patronage of her new husband and the patriarch of the Condé family, the Duc de Bourbon (1692-1740). These developments continued throughout the first, and only, decade of the couple's marriage and included the renovation of a *boudoir* for the Duchess, which functioned as her own private sitting-room (see Figure 1).

The extant space, despite a window that dominates its external wall, is cramped compared to surrounding chambers, and measures approximately ninety-six square feet in area.[2] Yet the boudoir provides an immersive experience due to its combination of painting and ornament, both of which decorate wooden panels covering its other three walls. The painted panels were completed from 1735 to 1737 by artist Christophe Huet, who deployed the *singerie* motif—depicting

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[1]Guillaume Cavelier, Guillaume Cavalier Fils, N. Pissot, and Jean de Nully, "Août 1728," *Mercure de France: Dédié au Roy,* August, 1728, 1904.

[2] Joanna M. Gohmann, "Living Together: Representations of Animals and the Performance of Elite Identities in French Spaces of Sociability, 1700-1789," (PhD. diss., The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2016), 229.

anthropomorphized monkeys who parodied human pursuits—throughout the interior. This thesis addresses the specific messages posed by the scheme of this boudoir, exploring its complex design and its elaborate subject-matter as reflections of a distinct cultural milieu. Despite their ostensibly lighthearted themes, the paintings of what came to be known as the 'Petite Singerie' functioned as pictorial catalogs of the material environments that shaped elite life, immersing boudoir occupants within tactile narratives of eighteenth-century French culture.

Little has been written on the Petite Singerie to-date, and the existing literature is driven by the work of two contemporary scholars. Nicole Garnier-Pelle, a curator at the Musée Condé currently located on the Chantilly estate, has corroborated artist attribution and patron history for works within the residence, including the Petite Singerie. Her consideration of the boudoir has been largely discursive in nature, forming the bulk of textual descriptions detailing Huet's simian scenes. Utilizing archival documents, Garnier-Pelle has highlighted pictorial markers that litter the singerie, connecting painted objects to the Bourbon Condé family and their country home.[3]

However, Garnier-Pelle refrains from critically analyzing said connections. She notes, "We do not know if the masters of the house were amused to see themselves represented by the traits of monkeys," assuming that Bourbon Condé residents were not offended by any potential comparisons the space encouraged.[4] Such an argument, based in archival lacuna, neglects to consider the daily usage of the boudoir and the imbalanced, gendered relations it embodied; while the Duc de

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[3]Nicole Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," in *The Monkeys of Christophe Huet,* eds. Nicole Garnier-Pelle, Anne Forray-Carlier, and Marie-Christine Anselm, trans. Sharon Grevet (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 72.

[4]"Nous ignororns si les maîtres de la maison s'amusaient de se voir ainsi représentés sous les trauts de singes. Il semble en tout cas qu'ils ne soient pas scandalisés de la chose et qu'ils aient encourage ces décors nettement caricaturaux." Nicole Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly* (Paris: In Fine Editions, 2021), 76.

Bourbon and Christophe Huet contributed to the design of a space neither would frequent, it was the Duchesse de Bourbon who used the Petite Singerie throughout her daily life.[5]

Joanna Gohmann, through her American dissertation entitled, "Living together: Representations of Animals and the Performance of Elite Identities in French Spaces of Sociability, 1700-1789," provides some nuance in this regard. Hypothesizing a potential reception of the Petite Singerie, Gohmann argues that the paintings created by Huet "entice the viewer to make comparisons between the acts of monkeys, [and] her own behavior."[6] In this manner, Gohmann stresses that the painted panels of the Petite Singerie acted as didactic aides, reminding the Duchesse de Bourbon and her female visitors of the fragility of their sociable veneers, as their biological relatives revealed underlying animalistic states.[7] While she draws upon the gendered audience of the boudoir to contextualize her argument about contemporaneous interpretations, Gohmann's analysis—like that of Garnier-Pelle—references generalized noblewomen without considering the identity of the Duchesse de Bourbon, specifically.

Privileging Mimi Hellman's assertion that "the value of decoration in eighteenth-century France was not as contingent upon makers, as it was upon users," this thesis recentralizes Caroline

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[5]See Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 27. Due to archival holes, no documentation of the commission exists, providing the possibility that the Duchesse de Bourbon was partially involved in its design. However, scholars such as Henri Malo and Meredith Martin have stressed the Duc de Bourbon's active involvement in renovation projects in this era, many of which started before the arrival of the Duchess at Chantilly. See Henri Malo, *Le Château de Chantilly* (Paris: Calmann-Levy, Éditeurs, 1938), 70-87. Therefore, I rely on the common assumption that the Petite Singerie was predominantly conceived by the Duke and/or Huet. For more general descriptions of the Chantilly renovations, see Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 4. Meredith Martin, *Dairy Queens* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 94-102.

[6]Gohmann, "Living Together," 207.

[7]Gohmann, "Living Together," 231.

de Hesse Rheinfels within scholarship surrounding the Petite Singerie.[8] Relying on a corpus of eighteenth-century theories that characterized architectural spaces as personifications of their owners and described interior designs which reciprocally objectified the noble body, I explore the boudoir as a multivalent reflection of the Duchess's own identity in eighteenth-century France. In this manner, this analysis incorporates a larger body of scholarship on French interior decoration, established by art historians including Hellman, Denise Amy Baxter, Ewa Lajer-Burcharth, Meredith Martin, Sarah Cohen, and Katie Scott.[9]

By investigating multiple messages produced throughout the design of the Petite Singerie, I also rely on the work of architectural historians, including Baxter and Martin, who have concluded that "interiors and interiority function[ed] as sites for negotiation [in eighteenth-century Europe] …where meanings could be altered [and] deployed in multiple ways."[10] Recognizing that the Petite Singerie therefore produced interstitial connotations, I divide my analysis into four sections organized by socio-cultural topics visible in the boudoir. I argue that the artistic culmination of these themes within the immersive space represents the many facets of the Duchesse de Bourbon, and her identity at Chantilly.

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[8]Mimi Hellman, "Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure in Eighteenth-Century France," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 32, no. 4 (1999): 418.

[9] The following constitutes a brief selection of a vast body of literature. On eighteenth-century perceptions of architectural space, see Ewa-Lajer Burcharth and Beate Söntgen, *Interiors and Interiority* (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2016); Denise Amy Baxter and Meredith Martin, eds. *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe: Constructing Identities and Interiors* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2010); and Katie Scott, *The Rococo Interior* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Regarding the objectification of the eighteenth-century body, reference a large collection of articles by Mimi Hellman, including, "Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure," and Sarah R. Cohen, "The Body as 'Character' in Early Eighteenth-Century French Art and Performance," *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 3 (1996).

[10] Baxter and Martin, *Architectural Space in Eighteenth-Century Europe*, 3.

The first section provides a brief introduction to the Petite Singerie, situating its eighteenth-century creators and their society in 1730s France. This portion contextualizes my later interpretations of the materials cataloged in boudoir panels, placing the paintings amongst shifting perceptions of object agency in eighteenth-century thought. From there, this analysis revolves around the figure of the Duchess herself, and her interactions with the material environments of Chantilly as they are depicted in Huet's panels. In section two, I analyze symbols of cross-cultural interchange in the Petite Singerie, noting that the boudoir positioned Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels amongst species imported to eighteenth-century France. The third section similarly draws upon the sociocultural heritage of the Duchess, utilizing her background to argue that the design of the Petite Singerie compared her to various exoticized commodities. My fourth, and final, section explores pastoral goods present throughout the boudoir, which situated the Duchess amongst rustic architecture in the French countryside and likened her to a structural component of dynastic heritage.

In order to best contextualize the narratives fostered by the Petite Singerie, I incorporate an interdisciplinary analysis of portraits, prints, literary texts, architectural theories, and natural history treatises from this same era. Through this approach, I not only consider the narratives facilitated by the patron and artist of the Petite Singerie, but also interpret the active renegotiation of such messaging by the Duchesse de Bourbon through her use of the space. Therefore, I propose that the Petite Singerie, through its painted catalog of objects, produced a complex representation of Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels that equated her to the many material goods at Chantilly.

SECTION ONE

An Imitative Boudoir

In order to unpack the multivalent narratives produced by the Petite Singerie, it is necessary to begin with a visual overview of the space and its connection to contemporaneous currents in French society. The boudoir represented the zenith of several cultural modes from the early eighteenth century, including fashions in interior design and shifts in scientific thought. In this sense, the space embodies larger themes tackled by multiple scholars of eighteenth-century art, though it has historically received little direct analysis.[11] This section stresses the impact of Enlightenment thought on interior design as evidenced by the boudoir, noting a rising interest in the agency of objects and their ability to encourage types of human interaction. By considering negotiations between actors and goods in this era, I highlight that the material catalogs captured in the paintings of the Petite Singerie blurred previous conceptions regarding the animacy of objects.[12]

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[11] On the intersection of science and visual culture, see Sarah Cohen, *Enlightened Animals in Eighteenth-Century Art: Sensation, Matter, and Knowledge* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021), where she analyzes another singerie room at Chantilly. See also, Mary Salzman, "Decoration and Enlightened Spectatorship," in *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*, eds. Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg (New York: Routledge, 2007).

[12]Carl Knappett, "Meaning in Miniature: Semiotic Networks in Material Culture," in *Excavating the Mind: Cross-Sections through Culture, Cognition and Materiality*, eds. Mads Jessen, Niels Johannsen, and Helle Juel (Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2012), 1-3. For discussion of animate furniture, specifically in the eighteenth century, see Hellman, "Furniture, Sociability, and the Work of Leisure," which is referenced throughout this analysis.

Writing in 1745, French architect Germain Boffrand noted, "The character of the master of a house, can be judged by the manner in which it is arranged, decorated, and furnished."[13] Though this thesis focuses on the Duchesse de Bourbon, the dynamics of her boudoir therefore cannot be understood without briefly considering the nature of its design, which was most likely doctored between its artist and her husband.[14] Louis III de Bourbon—who preferred the title of the Duc de Bourbon—was the grandson of Louis XIV (1638-1715) by his mother, Madame de Nantes (1673-1743), and the successor of Louis Henri III de Bourbon (1668-1710) in the Condé cadet line.

Despite his illustrious heritage, the political career of the Duc de Bourbon was relatively short-lived. In 1723, the Duke was named first minister to his cousin, Louis XV (1710-1774), for whom he coordinated a marriage with Marie Leszczyńska (1703-1768).[15] With the exception of this match, initiatives spurred by the Duke were widely disliked, as he promoted unpopular revisions to French tax structure amidst national famine.[16] Due to the machinations of the rival Orléans line and the well-positioned Cardinal Fleury, the Duke was exiled to his estate in 1726, when renovations at Chantilly became his primary focus.[17] These campaigns eventually included the re-painting of private apartments of the Petite Château, including the Petite Singerie and its public counterpart, the Grande Singerie (see Figure 2).

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[13] As cited by John Whitehead, *The French Interior in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 1992), 73.

[14]Malo, *Le Château de Chantilly*, 78.

[15]Mathieu Deldicque, ed. *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance: Porcelaines de Meissen et de Chantilly* (Château de Saint-Rémy-en-France: Éditions Monelle Hayot, 2020) Exhibition Catalog, 44.

[16]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance*, 44.

[17]Kathleen Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture: Mademoiselle de Clermont and J. -M. Nattier," in *Women, Art and the Politics of Identity in Eighteenth-Century France,* eds. Melissa Hyde, Jennifer Milam, Allyson Poska, and Abby Zanger (New York: Routledge, 2016), 78.

As projects for a *prince du sang*—whose funding was only rivaled by the monarchy—these commissions represented an impressive echelon of artistic production. In the early eighteenth century, the height of interior decoration was marked by *le style modern*, which historians now reference as the Rococo art movement.[18] The Rococo was marked by playful subject-matter, florid organic motifs, and elaborate compositional schemes.[19] Ironically human monkeys were particularly popular subjects within Rococo interior designs, and no artist better embodied this singerie genre than Christophe Huet.

Huet had trained under the tutelage of decorative artist Claude Audran III, in whose workshop he studied alongside preeminent painter-decorators, including Antoine Watteau and Jean Baptiste Oudry.[20] Like Oudry, Huet practiced animal painting, though his artistic formation spurred his work as a *peintre d'ornaments*, who variously repurposed patterns and designs within site-specific decorative projects.[21] The Duc de Bourbon likely encountered the work of Huet in 1733, through a commission the artist completed with Audran for the Duchess du Maine, the Duke's aunt.[22] When Huet began work on the Petite Singerie only two years later, the artist represented the height of the

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[18]Melissa Lee Hyde, "Rococo Redux," *Rococo: Continuing the Curve*, eds. Sarah D. Coffin, Gail S. Davidson, Penelope Hunter-Stiebel, and Melissa Lee Hyde (New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2008), 3.
14.

[19]Penelope Hunter-Stiebel, "The Continuing Curve," in *Rococo: Continuing the Curve*, eds. Sarah D. Coffin, Gail S. Davidson, Penelope Hunter-Stiebel, and Melissa Lee Hyde (New York: Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum, 2008), 3.

[20]Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 24.

[21] Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 23.

[22]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 37.

Rococo aesthetic pulse, and was suitable for a royal commission due to his elite artistic training and prestigious clientele-base.

Though both men therefore shared a clear interest in the Rococo style, they were additionally united in their engagement with rising Enlightenment theories, which came to impact subjects chosen for the paintings in the Petite Singerie. As previously mentioned, the boudoir is relatively small compared to its neighboring chambers, and therefore provides a focused spatial experience. The immersive nature of the room is enhanced by paintings that cover its walls, which couple with ornament along the ceiling and door leaves to create a busy decorative scheme. Its lowest register of paintings is composed of nine panels, which hang below the wainscotting of the room (see Figures 3-11). Though these chair-rail paintings do not appear to be united by narrative, they each emphasize material display, as Huet depicted various goods associated with outdoor pursuits in their compositions. Amongst these, the artist included: gurgling fountains, heaps of cherries, swaying guitars, sheaves of hay, parrots atop ajar cages, and cases of wine alongside their accompanying glasses. Through the inclusion of such objects associated with sensorial stimulation—from lyrical instruments to ripened fruit—the items of the Petite Singerie thereby referenced a larger decorative interest in empirical didacticism.

Indeed, the boudoir as a room-type was connected to the enrichment of the senses. As a contemporary French architect named Le Camus de Mezières highlighted, "the boudoir is regarded as the abode of sensual delight."[23] Eighteenth-century author Jean-François de Bastide, with the assistance of architect Jacques-François Blondel, similarly emphasized material synesthesia in his

[23]As cited by Ed Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 53, no.2 (June 1994): 193.

description of an imagined boudoir. In his novel-cum-architectural-treatise entitled *La Petite Maison*, he describes a boudoir owned by the fictious Marquise de Trémicour, which features:

> "Color [that] was applied by Dandrillon, who had mixed his paints with the fragrances of violet, jasmine, and rose. All this decoration was also applied to a screen that concealed a spacious corridor, where the Marquis had arranged for musicians to play."[24]

Though all three writers amplified later French associations between the boudoir and sexual license, such contemporaneous descriptions of boudoir spaces linked the Petite Singerie to eighteenth-century interests in the experientiality of decorative design.[25] In this context, Mary Salzman has noted the capacity of the Rococo genre, at large, to elucidate sensory reactions, requiring audiences to interpret the narratives of artworks based on sensorial memory.[26] Rococo artistic production thereby encouraged educated viewers to utilize multi-sensorial means of engagement—a topic hotly debated by contemporaneous scientists and *philosophes*.

Indeed, the close of the seventeenth century had witnessed increasingly prevalent physiological and philosophical treatises that espoused the contingent theory of sensationalism: a negotiation of the environment predicated on sensory input from the material world.[27] For instance, theorists such as John Locke, whose influential *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* was written in the 1690s (and published in French in 1700), had developed a strain of empiricism based on patterns

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[24]Jean-François de Bastide, *The Little House,* trans. Rodolphe el-Khoury (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1996), 9, 76.

[25]Baxter and Martin, *Architectural Space in Eighteenth Century Europe*, 2.

[26]Salzman, "Decoration and Enlightened Spectatorship," 160.

[27]Cohen, *Enlightened Animals,* 4.

of repeated observation.[28] Locke envisioned humans as *tabula rasa*, or blank slates who developed intellectually through sensorial stimulation over the course of their lifetimes. As art historians from distinct geographic and methodological specialties have highlighted, strains of such Enlightened thought impacted art circles throughout the western hemisphere.[29]Artists like Huet renegotiated their aesthetic production, while patrons, including the Duc de Bourbon, shifted their modes of reception, each responding to new interpretations of the external world.

Yet no discussion of the Petite Singerie would be complete without also recognizing its part in the larger singerie genre, which encouraged reflections on other—but related—scientific debates in the eighteenth century. Six singerie paintings comprise the second register of the boudoir, which stretches from the wainscotting to the ceiling of the space (see Figures 12-17). While these panels depict various narratives of elite life, from the daily toilette to hunting trips, they also share a heighted attention to cataloging specific objects. These goods are often given unusual visual prominence in their compositions, where they are utilized in Chantilly-like settings by simian counterparts of Bourbon Condé residents.

Singerie narratives, as a genre, were initially conceived as a model of social criticism, playing upon medieval depictions of the monkey which equated the animal to the devil incarnate, who aped the image of the Christian god.[30] Such associations morphed throughout the early modern era, resulting in a genre of seventeenth-century Flemish genre-scenes. These satirized a rising bourgeoise

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[28]Cohen, *Enlightened Animals,* 5.

[29]See Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), Sarah Cohen, *Enlightened Animals,* and Jennifer Roberts, "Copley's Cargo: Boy with a Squirrel and the Dilemma of Transit," *American Art* 21, no.2 (2007).

[30]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 15.

class, whose simian foils emulated aristocratic pursuits in the work of Brueghel II and Teniers II.[31] Eighteenth-century singeries in France took up this socioeconomic commentary, responding to a rising class of financiers who were in the process of buying up the material accoutrements that had designated noble existence. In this period, the genre was versatile in medium, as the monkey was portrayed in paintings, sculptures, and prints.[32] Thus the multivalent term—singerie—reflected a tension between tangible thing and inanimate concept, as it simultaneously connoted social commentary, works of art, and interior rooms.

French aristocrats were attracted to the singerie in the form of an immersive space, created through the means of multiple decorative paintings in much the same manner as the Petite Singerie. This particular subgenre was developed at the turn of the eighteenth century, through the successive careers of Audran, Watteau, and Huet. While all singerie rooms produced amongst these artists capitalized on the role of monkey imitation, their works oscillated between scenes of whimsical fantasy and farcical humor. Singerie spaces fashioned by Huet at the Château du Champs sur Marne and Hôtel Rohan Strasbourg relegated their simians to the corners of the paneled compositions, where they engage in acts of tomfoolery and scatological humor (see Figures 18-19).[33] In contrast, designs like the Petite Singerie and Audran's *Nursery of Apes* at Versailles responded to the elevated status of their clients by centralizing monkey figures who elegantly mimic French elites (see Figure 20).[34] Regardless of their simians' intents, singerie paintings brought the domain of the Enlightened

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[31]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 16.

[32]See Gohmann, "Living Together," 201-207. Huet contributed to several printed collections of singeries, including the social commentary entitled *Singeries, ou differentes actions de la vie humaine représentées par des singes,* which was engraved by Jean-Baptiste Guélard.

[33]For a detailed description of contemporaneous singerie rooms created by Huet, see Gohmann, "Living Together," 207-236.

[34]Gohmann, "Living Together," 225.

human into the hands of their monkey protagonists, who cogently utilize material goods and the multi-sensorial reactions they entail. In this sense, the second register of the Petite Singerie engaged with zoological debates that sought to re-organize the animal kingdom.

By the start of singerie painting at Chantilly in 1735, sensationalist philosophers had applied Lockeian theories to various species. For instance, French philosophe, David Boulliers, hypothesized in 1728 that animals acted upon reactions to external stimuli much like their human counterparts.[35] Similarly, Jesuit writer Père Bougeant posited in 1729 that animals communicated with one another through their own form of visual and auditory cues, disrupting the supremacy of human linguistics.[36] Thus, mounting scholarship ruptured hierarchical distinctions that had persisted since Descartes' characterization of the animal as a soulless machine.[37] Materialist philosophers, including La Mettrie and Diderot, would not eliminate all distinctions between the human and animal kingdoms until the mid-eighteenth century; however, animals which were associated with acts of human parody—or those that could easily imitate the rational, human species—held particular cache by the 1730s.[38]

Such scientific deliberations were clearly present in the minds of the creators of the Petite Singerie. When analyzing animal paintings created by Huet, Sarah Cohen has demonstrated that,

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[35]Sarah R. Cohen, "Animal Performance in Oudry's Illustrations to the Fables of La Fontaine," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 39, no. 1 (2010): 56.

[36]Cohen, "Animal Performance," 48. For a deeper analysis of linguistics and Enlightenment thought, couched in the analysis of talking parrots, see Thomas DiPiero, "Voltaire's Parrot; or, How to Do Things with Birds," *Modern Language Quarterly* 70, no.3 (September 1, 2009).

[37]Cohen, *Enlightened Animals,* 5.

[38]Cohen, *Enlightened Animals,* 5.

"Huet appealed to [a] culture of sensibility in rendering animals with overt emotionality."[39] In turn, the Duc de Bourbon amassed a reputable natural history cabinet, which brought exotic species and scientific samples to Chantilly.[40] Both figures' interest in zoological scholarship was thereby given representation in the painted simians of the Duchesse de Bourbon's boudoir.

The intelligence of these monkeys is underscored by the ceiling of the space, which features stories taken from the seventeenth-century text known as the *Fables de la Fontaine,* intermixed with garlands of foliage and human figures from the *Cris de Paris* series (see Figure 21). The former includes pictorial representations of children's stories entitled, "The Fox and The Stork," "The Rooster and the Pearl," "The Fox and the Bust," and "The Hen with the Golden Eggs."[41] Louis Robbins has stressed the loaded messaging in these seemingly innocent stories, stating "part of the charm of the fables…is in the careful depiction of the animals, which act simultaneously as humans in animals' clothing and animals in their own clothing."[42] By incorporating excerpts from the *Fables* that pair animals and objects—which were conceived by an author who was an active supporter of nascent sensationalism—Huet thereby again underscored animalistic interactions with material culture, and a fascination with imitation then pervasive in French society.[43]

In contrast to the painted ceiling and three walls of the Petite Singerie, a lone external wall features accordion door leaves that fold back to reveal an exterior-facing window and a small decorative railing (see Figure 22). Vegetal motifs and rope-bound bundles proliferate throughout this

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[39]Cohen, "Animal Performance," 55. Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 90-92.

[40]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 47.

[41]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 92.

[42]Louis Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots: Exotic Animals in Eighteenth-Century Paris* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 159.

[43] Cohen, "Animal Performance," 55. Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 90-92.

window's compressing panels, and other intermediary leaves in the room, leaving little negative-space in their wake (see Figure 23). This copious pictorial arrangement fashioned across the walls of the boudoir is further broken by three mirrors that are hung throughout the single row of singerie panels (see Figure 24).

One expansive mirror holds the central-most position in the room, while two smaller mirrors hang on the doors of its entry and exit. These outermost mirrors emulate the size and shape of the singerie paintings, providing a decorative symmetry that directs the gaze of a visitor to the middle looking-glass, which is nearly double the width of its counterparts (see Figure 25). Thus, the mirrors in the boudoir underscored the imitative theme propagated by the Huet's singerie characters, as an occupant in the room encountered their copied figure in several reflections.

Thus, the Duchesse de Bourbon was immersed within the pictorial scheme of the Petite Singerie through her bodily navigation of the space and the constant reflection which ensued. Hellman, in her analysis of contemporaneous design schemes, has argued "in this arena of multiple framing devices and dazzling reflections, subjecthood was inseparable from objecthood."[44] Building upon this framework, we can assume that the mirrors of the Petite Singerie prompted comparisons between the Duchess and the objects she utilized in her boudoir, equating her to the forms of material decoration that featured in her painted panels. Hellman has additionally argued that mirrors in the eighteenth-century pictorialized their users.[45] In this sense, the reflection of the Duchesse de Bourbon, which hung parallel to scenes of monkey figures, encouraged viewers to draw similarities between her and the focus of the space's Enlightened paintings. By likening the Duchess to the

[44]Mimi Hellman, "Staging Retreat: Designs for Bathing in Eighteenth-Century France," in *Interiors and Interiority,* eds. Ewa Lajer-Burcharth and Beate Söntgen (Berlin: Walter De Gruyter, 2016), 63.

[45]Hellman, "Staging Retreat," 60.

monkeys of her boudoir, the scheme of the Petite Singerie thrust Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels into empirical studies that blurred the liminal space between human and animal, actor and object, sign and referent. Therefore, the pictorial and physical components of the Petite Singerie incorporated the Duchesse de Bourbon into a design which constructed an interstitial and mutable representation of her identity, based in material culture.

SECTION TWO

Exotic Pets in an Elite Household

While the mirrors of the Petite Singerie equated the Duchesse de Bourbon to a monkey, material identifiers in its painted panels not only connected the animal to scientific thought, but also to dialogues of cross-cultural exchange. Throughout the 1730s, foreign flora and fauna became increasingly accessible due to colonial conquest, and new findings were recorded in field notes and domestic interiors, alike.[46] Katie Scott has emphasized the juxtaposition of live models and decorative objects in eighteenth-century apartments, arguing that design schemes "underlined the often abrupt conjunction effected between nature wrought and nature caught."[47] This section takes the foreign beings present in the panels—and space—of the Petite Singerie as its line of inquiry, arguing that the material catalog they produced equated the Duchesse de Bourbon to an exotic pet kept at the Chantilly estate.

Indeed, the animal protagonists of Huet's singerie panels, and their avian compatriots on the chair-rail paintings and ceiling of the boudoir, represented species brought to France from foreign markets. The latter were more common, as parrots were shipped from a variety of tropical locales and relatively easy to transport.[48] However, birds with colorful plumage, including the scarlet macaw

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[46]Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 172.

[47]Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 175.

[48]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 126.

documented in the lower register of the boudoir, were considered opulent commodities and highly valued.[49] Monkeys, though they were similarly available from Asian, African, and Caribbean markets, were more troublesome goods, whose ill-behaved antics were often immortalized in the singerie genre, as previously discussed.[50]Though both species were kept by French elites in the eighteenth century, simians were therefore less common in households in the early 1700s.[51]

In the most basic sense, the proliferation of both animals in the panels of the Petite Singerie therefore spoke to the wealth of the Bourbon Condés, referencing the luxury of material goods that they could afford.[52] The pictorial narratives of the boudoir allude to exotic simians' normalized presence on the Chantilly estate, as they manage activities associated with elite pastimes on its grounds. Several singerie figures in Huet's panels, including two female monkeys out for a hunt and servants in a sledding scene, even sport the Condé family colors of dun and amaranth.[53] Though these scenes clearly incorporate elements of artistic fantasy, their use of such sartorial practices provided provoking implications for the Duchesse de Bourbon, who may have used the boudoir as a subsection of her larger *garde-robe*—or dressing room—nearby.[54]

Through her daily usage of the space, mirrors in the Petite Singerie captured the foreign-born, Duchesse de Bourbon's act of donning Condé liveries, strengthening connections between her

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[49]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 126.

[50]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 126.

[51]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 126.

[52]Kathleen Chrisman-Campbell, "Beauty and the Beast: Animals in the Visual and Material Culture of the Toilette," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 42 (2013): 148.

[53]Gohmann, "Living Together," 225.

[54]Gohmann, "Living Together," 229.

and the exotic imports on the boudoir walls. As the third daughter of Eleonore Marie-Anne de Lowestein (1686-1753) and landgrave Ernest-Leopold de Hesse Rheinfels (1684-1749), Caroline was raised in the unconsolidated lands of present-day Germany, with customs distinct from those practiced in France.[55] The presence of live monkeys in the Chantilly menagerie, who arrived at the estate half a decade before the Duchess and found counterparts in the Petite Singerie, thereby encouraged her characterization as yet another foreign pet brought to the estate of the Bourbon Condés.

The extended royal family's adoption of pet monkeys in this period is documented within the genre of portraiture, as exemplified by an undated work entitled, *Maria Anna of Bourbon with a Baby Trained Monkey,* by Pierre Gobert (see Figure 26). In the artwork, a small simian appeals to his young mistress as she tugs on a fluttering carmine ribbon dangling from a bonnet that the animal wears. The cap of the animal, and the swath of coordinating red fabric which it holds, allude to the eighteenth-century practice of dressing pet monkeys in fashionable attire, playing upon their role as imitators of French elites while showcasing material display (see Figure 27). Eighteenth-century writer, Louis-Antoine de Caraccioli criticized this elite practice in his *Dictionnaire critique*, in which he described the capuchin as, "little monkeys that people have for show, or because they resemble them."[56]

In this sense, the dressing materials worn by Huet's painted monkeys identified the Duchesse de Bourbon as a docile companion who could be dressed and paraded about as a sign of family affluence. This association was no doubt engendered by the comparative youth of the Duchess, whose husband was twenty-two years her senior. While age discrepancies between married

[55]Cavelier et. al, "Août 1728," 1897.

[56]As cited by Chrisman-Campbell, "Beauty and the Beast,"156.

partners were relatively normalized in the early modern era, contemporaneous accounts emphasize the age gap. The *Mercure de France*, which reported on Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels' arrival at Chantilly in 1728, notes,"all of this illustrious Company were in admiration of the grace, the beauty, the noble and engaging manner, and the spirit of the young Duchesse de Bourbon, *who was not yet fourteen years old*."[57] Through aesthetic and written accounts, the Duchesse de Bourbon was therefore likened to an infantile and compliant pet.

Meredith Martin describes a similar comparison facilitated by the treatment of Marïe-Adéladïde de Savoie, the future Dauphine de France, at Versailles in the late 1690s. The young princess was given a dedicated apartment in the dairy of the royal menagerie, where she studied French culture amidst surrounding pens filled with other diplomatic gifts.[58] While the Petite Singerie was unable to accommodate such large animals, it may have witnessed interactions between the Duchess and living creatures in much the same manner.

In the fifteenth edition of his popularized work entitled, *Histoire Naturelle*, French naturalist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, stressed the prevalence of monkeys in spaces like the Petite Singerie. Kimberly Chrisman-Campbell notes that within his scientific text, "the Comte de Buffon illustrated a capuchin monkey in what had become his natural habitat: not the jungle, but a lady's boudoir" (see Figure 28).[59] Such accounts, though facetious in their intent, underscored the common presence of smaller, live monkeys in feminine apartments.

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[57]"Toute cette illuftre Compagnie fut dans l'admiration des graces, de la beauté, des manieres nobles et engageantes, et de l'efprit de la jeune Ducheffe de Bourbon, qui n'a pas encore 14 ans accomplis." Guillaume Cavalier et. al., "Août 1728," 1901. (My emphasis).

[58]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 78.

[59]Chrisman-Campbell, "Beauty and the Beast," 148, 152.

Contemporaneous artistic production also portrayed monkeys and parrots in the eighteenth-century interior, where avian species were kept in large cages—like those given pictorial form in the Petite Singerie—while their smaller simian species were subdued by ball-and-chain leashes.[60] Such restraints are exemplified in the painting known as *Portrait of A Marmazet,* by Hugh Douglas Hamilton, which features a petite monkey chained to his ornate mahogany pen (see Figure 29). The Chippendale Society has characterized said marmoset's abode, which was based on a physical model, as "his Chinese-style house, complete with sloping eaves and little bells, with a small platform in front of a doorway and an oval window above."[61] The description and image of this cage bear an uncanny resemblance to pictorial frameworks utilized by Huet throughout the paintings of the Petite Singerie, underscoring the relationship between the Duchess and exotic pets at Chantilly.

For instance, in the singerie panel entitled *Le Jeu,* three monkey aristocrats—two females and one male—engage in the elite past-time of card playing (see Figure 30). At first glance, they inhabit a space filled with European material goods, replete with a delicate card table, a matching pink *meuble* set, and classical statuaries. However, green pedestals upon which the latter rest find their visual counterpart in voluptuous jade curtains, which are conjoined by the architectural form of a pointed roof. This structure—through its lantern shape and pointed outcroppings—emulates both Hamilton's pen and the cap of the *Kiosque Chinois* building that was located within the expansive gardens at Chantilly (see Figure 31).

Through the latter, the paintings of the Petite Singerie were situated within the wider material environments of the country estate. In a travelogue published in 1791 entitled, *Promenades,*

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[60]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 145.

[61]"January 2019," *The Chippendale Society Newsletter* 2019*,* no. 144 (January 2019): 1.

ou Itinéraire des jardins de Chantilly, authors René-Louis de Girardin, Stanislas Girardin, and Jacques Mérigot described the edifice, stating:

> "The Kiosk, of which we give you a view, is a Chinese pavilion, surmounted by a lantern and surrounded by four smaller pavilions, which each—for dispersal purposes—contain a Chinese figure playing various musical instruments."[62]

Common conceptions of foreign architectural styles—or French perceptions thereof—thereby linked the paintings of the Petite Singerie with pens and architectural structures on the Chantilly grounds. In the paintings by Huet, these exotic backgrounds frame acts of elite leisure like card playing, which may have occurred in the boudoir as the Duchess kept company. Such stylized surrounds likened the Petite Singerie, and by extension the country grounds, to an ornate cage encircling the Duchesse de Bourbon.

Chrisman-Campbell has noted the prevalence of this comparison in eighteenth-century thought, as restraints on parrots or dogs kept in the French boudoir similarly referenced the entrapment of their female owners.[63] However, other occupants in the Petite Singerie bore the brunt of the metaphor fostered by its simians and their confining material frames. Other singerie panels, such as the painting entitled, *Dame á sa Toilette,* document the presence of servants, who most likely frequented the boudoir alongside the Duchess as she went about her daily routines (see Figure 32). *Dame á sa Toilette* displays a monkey noblewoman, who is assisted by several attendants as she enacts

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[62]"*Le Kiosque,* dont nous donnons une Vue, est un pavillon chinois, surmonté d'une lantern, et entouré de quatre pavillons plus petits, qui ont chacun, pour amortissment, une figure chinoise, jouant de quelque instrument de musique." René-Louis de Girardin, Stanislas Girardin, and Jacques Mérigot, *Promenades, Ou, Itinéraire Des Jardins de Chantilly : Orné d'un Plan et de Vingt Estampes Qui En Représentent Les Principales Vues* (Paris : Chez Desenne, Imprimeur-libraire, 1791), 40.

[63]Chrisman-Campbell, "Beauty and the Beast," 156.

her morning dress. She is armed with objects associated with elite beautification, from powdering gowns, to red-lacquered mirrors, to hair curlers which have fallen on the parquet floor.[64] The attendants which assist the central figure of the scene assume subservient positions; as one cares for the mistresses' coiffure, the other kneels in the corner of the composition, hunched over as she aides in the grooming practice.

In much the same manner, the simian featured in *Maria Anna of Bourbon with a Baby Trained Monkey* is relegated to the confines of the portrait. In the work, Maria Anna reaches out as if to touch her servile monkey, in a gesture which contrasts her rosy forearm with the animals' dark tufts of fur. As noted by Anne Lafont, such compositions were first popularized in portraiture of the late 1600s, as aristocratic women sought to emphasize their own pale complexions with darker-toned foils.[65] While these aristocratic counterparts were often domesticated animals like monkeys, elite women also co-opted the body of Black, enslaved children in pursuit of this contrast.[66] Exotic animals were similarly interchanged with enslaved peoples in the interior space of the boudoir, as the latter were increasingly brought into elite homes in the later eighteenth century.[67]

Scenes like *Dame á sa Toilette* therefore tapped into artistic traditions that extenuated racist, societal associations between enslaved, Black persons and subservient animals—both of whom were

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[64]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 87.

[65]Anne Lafont, "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker: Art Historical Perspectives on Race," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 51, no. 1 (Fall 2017): 92-93.

[66]Lafont, "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker," 92-93. Laura Martin, "Purebloods, Pages, and Pugs: Visual Representations of Power in Late Seventeenth-Century France," (paper presented at the RASC/a Art History Graduate Student Conference, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, April 2, 2022).

[67] Chrisman-Campbell, "Beauty and the Beast," 164.

imported to France from the African continent.[68] Thus, if the mirrors of the Petite Singerie compared the Duchesse de Bourbon to an exotic and docile pet, they additionally pictorialized her servants, who may have been people of color forcibly imported into France.[69] The latter were more violently likened to subservient animals, as their subjectivity was compared to a material accessory.[70]

[68]Gohmann, "Living Together," 183.

[69]Hellman, "Staging Retreat," 60.

[70]Lafont, "How Skin Color Became a Racial Marker," 92-93.

SECTION THREE

Foreign Commodities in the Bourbon Condé Collection

As previously discussed, eighteenth-century, French audiences conflated monkeys with peoples who hailed from similar geographic origins, including African individuals imported through the slave trade.[71] However, the French were also marked by their deliberate confusion of distinct cultural Others, who they depicted interchangeably in eighteenth-century aesthetic projects. In this problematic context, monkeys became interchangeable signs of a generic exoticism, rather than connoting a specific ethnicity.[72] For instance, descriptions like those in the *Promenades* highlighted a French fascination with peoples from Eastern Asia, who were also incorporated into the singerie genre.[73] Luxury objects, including those documented in the panels of the Petite Singerie, similarly tapped into this interest in the 'Far East' and its artistic production. This section explores the

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[71]Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 145.

[72]For the purposes of this essay, I refrain from applying Edward Said's term "orientalism," to artistic production at Chantilly in the 1730s, as it defines imperialist rhetoric in the nineteenth century. More temporally-specific terminology is instead utilized, including *chinoiserie,* as it similarly connotes the stereotyping and ethnocentric representations French aristocrats applied to cultural Others. In so doing, I emulate the model offered by Katie Scott. See Katie Scott, "Playing Games with Otherness," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 66, (2003): 189-248. For a larger discussion of French conceptions of cultural Others in the eighteenth century and their association with monkeys in French art, see Gohmann, "Living Together," 178-193.

[73] Diane Fourny, "A Strange Familiarity: Monkeys and Chinamen in Enlightenment France," *The French Review* 92, no. 4 (May 2019): 157.

depiction of such goods within the material catalogs of the Petite Singerie, arguing that its paintings included the Duchesse de Bourbon within their inventory of foreign commodities.

Eighteenth-century, French engagement with Eastern Asian societies found countless representations in the art world, which were grouped under the label of *chinoiserie.* As noted by Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, this movement was a pan-European enterprise, and therefore imbricated within multiple levels of cross-cultural interchange.[74] The phenomena simultaneously referenced the acquisition of exotic goods from Eastern Asia, the European emulation of Asian artistic processes, and the creation of artworks which depicted Chinese and Japanese subjects.[75] Despite these proto-Asian origins, Anne Betty Weinshenker has emphasized the inherently French background of the style, noting its intertwined development with the Rococo as the two "complimented, stimulated, and contributed to each other," in domestic artistic production.[76]

Though French audiences' preoccupation with chinoiserie reached its height in the early eighteenth century, the movement built upon increased levels of exchange that had developed in the late 1600s. As early as 1664, first minister Jean-Baptiste Colbert had established the *Compagnie française pour le commerce des Indes Orientales,* which promoted economic interchange with Chinese traders.[77] In the same period, Jesuit missionaries—who wrote to eager audiences back in France—settled in Chinese cities on evangelical missions.[78] Though French merchants remained largely

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[74]Daniëlle Kisluk-Grosheide, "The Reign of Magots and Pagods," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 37 (2002): 180.

[75]Ann Betty Weinshenker, "Chinoiserie Sculpture," *Dalhousie French Studies* 43 (Summer 1998): 45, 48.

[76]Weinshenker, "Chinoiserie Sculpture," 48.

[77]Fourny, "A Strange Familiarity," 160.

[78]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 20.

constricted to coastal cities, the news they brought back to court, coupled with letters written by ecclesiastics, thereby prompted rising interest in Asian civilizations. These accounts were supplemented by diplomatic visits to the court of Louis XIV, including the Chinese Jesuit Michael Shen Fuzongm in 1684, and royal ambassadors from Siam in 1686.[79] Thus, by the development of the Petite Singerie in the 1730s, a fascination with the 'Far East' was well ingrained within the minds of the French aristocracy, including Bourbon Condé family members.

Utilizing this French captivation with cultural Others as a framework, the paintings of the Petite Singerie can be read as inventories of chinoiserie commodities collected at the Chantilly estate. For instance, the panel painting entitled, *Le Bain* portrays several porcelain goods, which aid two monkey figures in their performance of the elite practice of bathing (see Figure 33).[80] Within *Le Bain*, a porcelain bidet and its sponge are foregrounded in the pictorial plane, demarcating the precipice between the paintings' surface and its receding narrative. Bordered by copper gilding, the bidet features sweeping, schematic blue waves applied atop its white surface, emulating the coloring of Chinese porcelain wares that were valued throughout Europe. Though partially obscured from view, another colored porcelain plate—perhaps reflective of the Japanese Kakiemon style—rests atop a marquetry table on the right edge of the scene.

Hellman has emphasized the pervasive inclusion of chinoiserie goods in spaces of eighteenth-century sanitary practice, noting, "chinoiserie as a suggestive rhetorical move [was] considered appropriate for bathing rooms, seemingly because its levity was appealing in intimate spaces."[81] In this sense, Eastern Asian commodities functioned like singerie paintings themselves, in

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[79]Scott, "Playing Games with Otherness," 212.

[80]Hellman, "Staging Retreat," 57.

[81]Hellman, "Staging Retreat," 65.

that they provided seemingly-lighthearted narratives to artworks that emphasized the corporeality of the human body.[82] The fine line between the physical body and its sanitary tools during private acts like washing—especially in the context of sensationalist debates—thereby reminded viewers of *Le Bain* of the materiality of their own forms, encouraging comparisons drawn between their own bodies and the foreign commodities depicted.

The singerie panel entitled *Dame á sa Toilette* similarly showcases Eastern Asian material goods, though they are included in a grooming practice less fraught by corporeality. As previously noted, this panel depicts a noble simian as she prepares to receive guests during her morning dress, where she is assisted by two monkey servants that adjust her headpiece and file her nails. The monkey figures and their table are backed by a five-paneled silk screen, which centrally dominates the composition while arresting its recessional space. The screen displays two-dimensional renderings of figures in stylized Asian dress and settings, who are framed within curvilinear portals distinct from blue-and-gold fabric surrounds. A Louis XV cartel clock dangles in the heights of the composition, additionally drawing the viewer's gaze to the center of the panel [83] Through such formal choices, Huet gave opulent commodities premier compositional locations throughout the piece, likening the singerie scene to contemporaneous advertisements of luxury shops, including an engraving after François Boucher that publicized the business known as *La Pagode* (see Figure 34). The conflation of foreign species and chinoiserie porcelains throughout the entire corpus of panels in the Petite Singerie only strengthened this comparison, as the paintings of the boudoir replicated the experience of entering a cluttered establishment like *La Pagode*.

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[82]Gohmann, "Living Together," 233-234.

[83]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 87.

As noted by Diane Fourny, contemporaneous French thought typically relegated consumptions acts inherent to chinoiserie and luxury shops to the feminine realm, solidifying the connection between material culture and the paintings of the Duchesse de Bourbon's boudoir.[84]Through the pictorializing devices of the space, a visitor in the Petite Singerie was therefore compared to a female buyer satiating aristocratic tastes for chinoiserie. The painting entitled *Still Life of Porcelains with Monkey and Birds*, which was created between 1725 and 1730, depicts one such businesses, as it presents the potential goods one might find in the shop of a *marchand mericer* (see Figure 35).[85] The painting displays birds with colorful plumage, who flit amongst porcelain objects much like their avian counterparts in the boudoir of the Duchesse de Bourbon.

The porcelain wares advertised in *Still Life of Porcelains with Monkey and Birds* vary in their formal qualities, highlighting the multitude of designs and shapes available to French consumers. Larger vases decorated with both polychromatic and single color-ranges rest atop a lacquered table, while smaller vessels and figurines peer out from a red shelving unit. The latter constitute a cast of miniature characters—from a mother and child with generically Asian dress, to a seated and smiling buddha figure. Kisluk-Grosheide has noted that such seated figurines were termed *magots* in eighteenth-century French; however, the word simultaneously connoted "small, capricious, and grimacing monkeys," again responding to French conceptions which linked cultural Others and foreign species.[86] Such etymological conflations emphasized an inherent othering applied to Eastern Asian peoples, animals, and goods in French society.[87]

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[84]Fourny, "A Strange Familiarity," 164.

[85]Yohan Rimaud, ed. *Une des Provinces du Rococo: La Chine Rêvée de François Boucher* (Paris: In Fine Editions, 2019) 44.

[86]Kisluk-Grosheide, "The Reign of Magots and Pagods," 177.

[87]Gohmann, "Living Together," 183.

As has been previously noted, the Duchess de Bourbon was connected to similar monkey figures in her own boudoir by the distinctive pastimes and fashions Huet included in the panels. While she was new to French society, Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels' heritage as a European aristocrat precluded any direct comparisons between her and Eastern Asian peoples. Yet the multivalent deployment of the term *magot* held specific weight in the space of the Petite Singerie, as the monkeys painted by Huet—and the Duchesse by extension—may have been interpreted as porcelain figurines within this catalog of chinoiserie wares. Further, depictions of luxury shops advertised live monkeys for sale, such as the one featured in *Still Life of Porcelains with Monkey and Birds*, who is tethered to a Japanese-lacquered table by a red leash. Thus, the monkeys of the Petite Singerie characterized Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels, specifically, as an imported commodity bought by French elites—whose animacy was up for debate.

Bourbon Condé elites were avid collectors of such chinoiserie statuettes, including the Duc de Bourbon himself, whose post-mortem inventory documented sixty-one porcelain wares from the Meissen manufactory, including a tea-pot shaped like a monkey.[88] Yohan Rimaud has argued that *Still Life of Porcelains with Monkey and Birds* additionally documents this act of aristocratic accumulation, as its unclear pictorial backgrounds allow the painting to oscillate between the realm of the luxury shop and the noble *cabinet*.[89] In this sense, still life may also be read as a counterpart to the Grande Singerie at Chantilly, which functioned as a type of antechamber for guests hoping to visit the Duke's own collection of Eastern Asian goods.[90]

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[88]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance,* 23.

[89]Yohan Rimaud, *Une des Provinces du Rococo*, 44.

[90]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly,* 4. Gohmann, "Living Together," 223.

In contrast to the Petite Singerie, the Grande Singerie was located within the *appartements de parade* on the first floor of the estate, catering to its more public function.[91] The two rooms, which were successively painted by Huet, thereby embodied the gendering of spaces—and the material goods they contained—in eighteenth-century thought. While the term "boudoir" would not appear on architectural designs until the 1760s, by 1751 the *Encyclopédie* had delineated two types of personal cabinets: a masculine sitting room that was utilized as a public space for study and/or the contemplation of a collection, and a private feminine area that operated as a space for dressing, relaxation, or socialization.[92] By all accounts, the Grande and Petite Singeries emblematized this paradigm, contextualizing their occupants in very different material environments at Chantilly.

Huet began work on the panel paintings of the Grande Singerie following his completion of the Duchesse de Bourbon's boudoir in 1737. While the paintings in this space also incorporate references to the material catalog at Chantilly, their overarching narrative is farther reaching in its approach. The largest register of panels features four, geographical allegories, in which single human figures embody the continents of America, North Africa, Asia, and Europe, respectively.[93] Within each of these painted scenes, Huet compositionally highlighted said allegories, who sit atop raised pedestals in the center of their panels. Each figure is flanked by two subservient monkeys in the lower registers of the works, which Fourny has characterized by their loosely "sinicized" dress.[94]

Scott has noted that chambers in the tunneled *enfilade* route—like the Grande Singerie—signaled signs of status to eighteenth-century occupants through their decoration, conditioning

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[91]Gohmann, "Living Together," 222.

[92]As cited by Lilley, "The Name of the Boudoir," 194.

[93]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly,* 69.

[94]Fourny, "A Strange Familiarity," 162.

certain manners of import through their designs.[95] In the Duke's antechamber, paintings documented racist thought in France that simplified cultural Others to singular signifiers, surrounded by material goods and chinoiserie objects. The paintings by Huet thereby prepared visitors to appropriately appreciate the Duke's own Eastern Asian collection and the metaphorical domain it provided him, if one was lucky enough to be granted access from the antechamber into the following space.[96]

Indeed, the Duc de Bourbon counted amongst the many French nobles who were enraptured with the chinoiserie movement, and he accumulated an expansive collection of goods in the early 1700s. A panel in the antechamber entitled *L'Allegorie du Afrique du Nord* alludes to his collection, hinting at objects that occupants of the Grande Singerie might encounter in the neighboring chamber (see Figure 36). The painting centers a turbaned figure with a long, dangling mustache who gazes introspectively at various specimens preserved in jars around him, additionally alluding to exotic animals that the Duke may have housed in an aforementioned natural-history cabinet on the estate.[97]

Porcelain vessels provide a backdrop for the allegorical man, including blue-glazed pots affixed with gilded surrounds, blue-and-white vases characteristic of the popular Chinese style, and dusty terra-cotta forms. In this manner, the panel contrasts an allegorical depiction of the African continent, clothed in generalized North-African dress, with proto-Asian commodities. This African figure is additionally bordered by two monkeys in vaguely-Chinese clothing, who engage in the material production of Eastern Asian goods, including painted silk-screens and glazed porcelain-

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[95]Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 107, 114-115.

[96]Gohmann, "Living Together," 223.

[97]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly,* 68.

wares.[98] These monkey figures have contributed to another interpretation of the centralized human, who has been characterized as an allegorical alchemist searching for the chemical make-up of Eastern Asian, hard-paste porcelains.[99]

French domestic manufactories sought—and failed—to replicate the exact production of imported chinoiserie commodities in the eighteenth-century. In this sense, the panel fashioned by Huet in the Grande Singerie referenced the Duc de Bourbon himself, who had established a manufactory producing the secondary option, soft-paste porcelains, on the Chantilly estate in 1725.[100] Though they never matched foreign imports, the commodities produced at the Chantilly manufactory received high acclaim, and buyers quickly abandoned earlier domestic producers such as the Château Saint Cloud.[101]Porcelains created at the Chantilly were marked by their characteristic tin enamel glaze and a red, overglaze stamp which differentiated them from European rivals similarly attempting to profit off the craze for chinoiserie, including the Meissen manufactory in present-day Germany.[102]

By1735—the same year Christophe Huet began work on the Petite Singerie—the Duke and his manufactory were granted a royal privilege, allowing them solely to imitate Japanese Kakiemon wares in France.[103] The Kakiemon style was known for its use of primary colors upon contrasting

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[98]Fourny, "A Strange Familiarity,"162.

[99]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance*, 47.

[100]R.N.F., "Soft-Paste Porcelain from the Chantilly Factory" *Bulletin (St. Louis Art Museum)* 12, no. 3 (1976): 42.

[101]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance*, 19.

[102] R.N.F., "Soft-Paste Porcelain from the Chantilly Factory," 42, 46.

[103]R.N.F., "Soft-Paste Porcelain from the Chantilly Factory," 44.

white backgrounds, and appears along with other porcelain goods in the material catalogs depicted in the Petite Singerie, as has been previously discussed.[104] Thus, the paintings of the Duchesse de Bourbon's boudoir acted as mere advertisements of the commodities sold at Chantilly, while panels in the Grande Singerie depicted an active process of domestic production. By extension, the Duchesse de Bourbon was associated with an exotic commodity, while the Duc de Bourbon retained his human agency as a French taste-maker and masterful patron of the arts.

The inherently foreign identity constructed for the Duchess by the signerie rooms at Chantilly was emphasized by comparisons drawn between Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels and her predecessor in the role of the Duchesse de Bourbon Condé. The Duc de Bourbon's cousin and first wife, the late Marie-Anne de Bourbon Conti (1689-1720), had not only been a member of the native aristocracy, but was also a *princesse du sang* associated with the royal household.[105] This sociocultural rank was articulated in her own court portrait created by Pierre Gobert, where the first Duchesse de Bourbon confidently meets a viewer's gaze, draped in a blue gown decorated by the *fleur de lys* (see Figure 37). She points to a crown resting on a nearby table, doubly referencing her entrenched place within the ethnically French elite.

Scott has emphasized the stringent ethno-cultural hierarchies which operated in France in the eighteenth century, stating

> "at the apex of the pyramidal structure of *ancient régime* society stood the king, with below him the royal family and below them the princes and princesses of the blood, in order of their nearness to the throne…[who] were followed by the prince and princesses of foreign courts."[106]

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[104]R.N.F., "Soft-Paste Porcelain from the Chantilly Factory," 44.

[105]Malo, *Le Château de Chantilly*, 76.

[106]Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 102.

Thus, the portrait of Marie-Anne de Bourbon Conti highlighted her place in a distinctly French register of society based on familial affiliation with the royal figurehead, unlike Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels.[107]

Notably, the late Duchesse de Bourbon had contributed to the Duke's chinoiserie collection, as he inherited a large amount of Japanese lacquer-wares upon her death.[108]Such chinoiserie goods accumulated by the Duke were influential in the success of the Chantilly Manufactory, as its main engineer Cicaire Cirou utilized objects in the cabinet as models for domestic porcelain production.[109]Thus, in life, in death, and in artistic production, Marie-Anne de Bourbon Conti had contributed to French identity-construction in a manner inaccessible to the second Duchesse de Bourbon.

Hellman describes the active role Madame de Pompadour—another female taste-maker—took in porcelain production at the royal manufactory at Sèvres. She notes that "porcelain display [under Pompadour was] made a doubly nationalistic claim, inviting viewers to celebrate a royal agenda and define themselves in relation to Asian otherness."[110] When applying this assertion to the production of chinoiserie at Chantilly and its place in Bourbon Condé agendas, it becomes clear that the Duchesse de Bourbon lacked an involvement in communal goals accessible to Madame de

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[107]Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 102.

[108]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance*, 50.

[109]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance,* 21.

[110]Hellman, "Staging Retreat," 65. Notably, Pompadour was also oftcompared to a monkey in artistic production in the eighteenth century, in the form of sculptures and prints. This was likely a result of criticism regarding her bourgeoise background and role as the King's mistress, in contrast to ethno-cultural othering. See Nicole Garnier-Pelle, Anne Forray-Carlier, and Marie Christine Anslem, *The Monkeys of Christophe Huet,* trans. Sharon Grevet, (Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum, 2011), 175; and Gohmann, "Living Together," 195-197.

Pompadour—through her relationship with king Louis XV—and Marie-Anne de Bourbon Conti as a princess of the blood. Thus, Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels was possibly able to articulate her European difference from Eastern Asia through the consumption of exotic goods, yet she was occluded from participation in the Bourbon Condé project of French identity-construction. In contrast to the portrait by Gobert, the paintings of the Petite Singerie compared the foreign-born, Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels to chinoiserie commodities collected and sold by her extended in-laws, relegating her in the realm of inherent cultural exteriority.

SECTION FOUR

Dynastic Structures at Chantilly

The deployment of decorative sets served as a hallmark of luxurious interiors in eighteenth-century France, and the Petite Singerie was no exception in this regard. Indeed, a search for decorative harmony characterized the French sense of self just as powerfully as identity-construction vis-à-vis cultural others.[111] Elite rooms were correspondingly marked by their pursuit of interrelation and pattern, as textiles on unified *meuble* furniture-sets coordinated with matching window treatments, and decorative paintings depicted successive allegories in similar compositional formats.[112] While viewers within the Petite Signerie would have therefore recognized the aforementioned repetition of monkey figures and porcelain vessels throughout Huet's six main panels, educated elites were primed to search for nuanced patterns which contributed to a cohesive narrative.[113] Within the boudoir of the Duchesse de Bourbon, such dedicated viewers were rewarded by a schematized portrayal of the four seasons—whose material environments, this section argues, were intimately connected to Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels's identity at Chantilly. By drawing upon the pastoral artistic genre, such scenes emphasized the bounties of the natural landscape through

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[111]Mimi Hellman, "The Joy of Sets: The Uses of Seriality in the French Interior," in *Furnishing the Eighteenth-Century,* eds. Dena Goodman and Kathryn Norberg (New York: Routledge, 2007), 130.

[112]Hellman, "The Joy of Sets," 129, 138, 143.

[113]Hellman, "The Joy of Sets," 142.

their material forms. Thus, the Petite Singerie objectified the Duchess de Bourbon, comparing her body to structural components of Chantilly that perpetuated dynastic heritage.

A seasonal theme is pervasive throughout the boudoir, as ceiling cartouches portray human allegories of the four seasons, while the lower register of panels depicts tools necessary to enjoy outdoor recreations.[114] For instance, one chair-rail painting features two crossed spears and a horn at the center of its composition, which is suspended above a hunting trip's rewards: overflowing cornucopias and the head of a boar. The trophies in this panel are complemented by a larger singerie scene that hangs above them, which is entitled *Automne, Halte de Chasse* (see Figure 38). In the painting, Huet portrayed two female monkeys, dressed in Condé liveries, who are preparing to break their hunt for a meal at a *table de chasse*.[115] The muted colors of their riding gowns, coupled with mauve and sepia tones that permeate the painting, emphasize the autumnal period with which hunting is typically associated.

A stone picnic table foregrounds the composition of the work, where it prominently displays a spread of wine, cheese, and breads. As emphasized by this conspicuous positioning, *tables de chasse* symbolized an important part of elite life at Chantilly. Such architectural types could be found throughout the forest of the estate, where they were erected from the 1660s onward, connecting the Bourbon Condés to their landed title.[116] Drawing upon these references, the table featured in the Petite Singerie not only connoted the act of hunting—an activity reserved for the second estate—but also emphasized aristocratic displays of leisureliness and rustic pastime. By incorporating a permanent structure devoted to repose that was fit with a plentiful supper, the painting underscored

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[114]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 76-79.

[115]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 79.

[116]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 76.

the elite financial standing of the Bourbon Condés, who practiced hunting on their own land for enjoyment, rather than mere sustenance. Presumably, their forests were just as bountiful as the repast prepared for the singerie figures in Huet's panel, immersing the Duchesse de Bourbon within a material catalog that was marked by abundance.

In his depiction of the next successive season—winter—Huet again emphasized the marriage of natural landscapes and rustic architectural projects at Chantilly (see Figure 39). His untitled panel displays a sledding scene, in which three female monkeys sport material accoutrements that emphasize their chilly environment—from their ermine-lined coats and spotted hand-muffs, to the gilded sled in which they sit. Pastoral architectonics are again placed conspicuously throughout the painting, framing its vertical registers. Statuary grounds the base of the scene, where a stone water deity references the sculptural program of the Grande Dégre staircase at Chantilly's Grand Château.[117] At the opposite edge of the composition, a bridge terminates the spatial recession of the scene. Figural motifs connect this structure to the Pont du Roi, which provided access over a moat that encircled the main residential sector of Chantilly.[118] Such material markers, which could be connected to specific building campaigns at Chantilly, imbricated the boudoir—and the Duchesse de Bourbon who frequented it—within a larger genre of political self-fashioning.

The architectonics documented in the Petite Singerie were originally created in the second half of the 1600s, in a period where country architecture became a "battleground for the French elite," as noted by Meredith Martin.[119] In this era, pastoral buildings embodied landed aristocrats'

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[117]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism,"84.

[118]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 79.

[119]Martin, *Dairy Queens*, 71.

retreat from the centralization of monarchial power under Louis XIV. Many nobles sought refuge on their feudal estates, which they often found in need of restoration.[120] No complex benefited more than Chantilly from this search for *la vie champêtre*, as successive Prince des Condés throughout the turn of the eighteenth-century crafted a complex that rivaled Versailles.

The Chantilly residence was originally conceived by architect Jean Bullant in the sixteenth century, who designed the castle for a military officer of François I.[121] It remained a relatively austere site until pastoral renovations commenced in the late seventeenth century under the supervision of the Grande Condé, Louis II de Bourbon (1621-1686)—a veritable rival to Louis XIV who had played a prominent role in the uprising known as the Fronde. Banished to his estate after the unsuccessful coup, the Grande Condé employed popular architects, including those affiliated with Versailles like Andre Le Nôtre and Hardouin-Mansart, to undertake vast renovation projects in the late 1600s.[122] Building campaigns continued under the jurisdiction of Henri III Jules de Bourbon (1643-1709), and again under his son, Louis III de Bourbon (1668-1710), marking architectural renewal a dynastic enterprise at Chantilly.[123] Through their attention to material features on the estate, the singerie paintings therefore situated the Duchesse de Bourbon within a lineage of Bourbon-Condé, feudal identity-construction.

Though the Duc de Bourbon began construction projects at Chantilly nearly a decade after the death of the Sun King, his own renovations similarly enacted sociopolitical protest. Following his banishment in 1726, the Duke instituted what Kathleen Nicholson describes as, a "building

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[120]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 71-75.

[121]Garnier-Pelle, *Les Singeries de Chantilly*, 28.

[122]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 94-95.

[123]Malo, *Le Château de Chantilly,* 70-73.

campaign [which was] compensation for his own loss of power at court."[124] Throughout the late 1720s—coinciding with the arrival of Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels—the Duc de Bourbon employed architect Jean Aubert, who designed Chantilly's acclaimed stables while renovating the personal apartments of the estate.[125] Thus, architectural features in the panels of the boudoir additionally affiliated the Duchesse de Bourbon with a political rivalry renewed by her husband. By visually situating the Duchess with the material environment of Chantilly, the Petite Singerie solidified her place as the highest-ranking Bourbon Condé female, marking her function as a bulwark of familial prerogatives in this tumultuous political arena.

Yet the new Duchesse de Bourbon faced competition from her sister-in-law, who also utilized pastoral architectural to claim a central role in Bourbon Condé politics. In a portrait painted by Jean-Marc Nattier, Marie-Anne de Bourbon, known as Mademoiselle de Clermont (1697-1741), similarly drew upon an imagery of building projects at Chantilly (see Figure 40). In the painting, Madame de Clermont fashions herself in the guise of a nude goddess, lounging along the banks of a nearby body of water. Confidently meeting the gaze of an unknown viewer, she is flanked by a female servant and fleshy putto. The latter clasps a gilded ceremonial staff, symbolizing Clermont's own power over dynastic initiatives and familial identity in this era.[126]

Throughout the late 1720s, Madame de Clermont held influential sway as the head of the household of Queen Marie Leszczyńska, and she was well-liked at court, in contrast to her exiled brother.[127] In many ways, the younger sister of the Duc de Bourbon was therefore better positioned

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[124]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 78.

[125]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 27.

[126]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 77.

[127]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 77-78.

than him, and his wife, to represent ancestral identity to wide audiences. Despite this ingratiation with the monarchy, the portrait also positioned Madame de Clermont as an active contributor to pastoral architecture, as the building façade in its background referenced contemporaneous structures on the estate hiding hydraulic machinery.[128] Indeed, the very title of this work, *Madame de Clermont aux eaux minerals de Chantilly,* stressed the connection between its sitter and the pastoral narratives propagated on Bourbon Condé lands.

This message was targeted for audiences at Chantilly, where the portrait remained as a reminder of Clermont's distinction in the family.[129] Notably, Madame de Clermont chose to highlight said status only one year after the arrival of the Duchesse de Bourbon, cementing her position as the matriarch of the dynastic enterprise. Through the incorporation of *en source* allegorical motifs in the work—given form through lapping shores and a flowing water spout—Nattier also situated Madame de Clermont amongst hydraulic narratives of natural purity and fecundity, speaking to the character and import of his sitter.[130] Yet Clermont, who produced no issue, left the biological enactment of this rustic task—and its artistic parallels—to her younger sister-in-law.

While the paintings in the Petite Singerie depicted the Chantilly architectural project much like *Madame de Clermont aux eaux minerals de Chantilly*, structural additions to the boudoir also brought the natural environment into the space. Renovations implemented by the Duc de Bourbon witnessed the addition of popularized, gilded wooden panels, known as *boiseries,* throughout rooms in the residential sectors of the estate, including the Petite Singerie itself.[131] The use of mirrors and

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[128]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 79.

[129]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 77.

[130]Nicholson, "Practicing Portraiture," 74.

[131]Garnier-Pelle, "Singeries and Exoticism," 27.

boiseries in the boudoir of the Duchesse de Bourbon, as precious decorative arts accessible to a limited few, thereby emphasized the wealth and prestige of the Bourbon Condés, while fashioning the Petite Singerie and its occupants within the verdant landscape of the Rococo.

While the boudoir was considered an extremely luxurious model of eighteenth-century French architecture, its deployment of sinuous, organic forms was a common motif in contemporaneous decorative arts. Themes of decorative abundance were epitomized in *La Petite Maison*, which included a boudoir whose walls:

> "Were covered with mirrors whose joinery was concealed by sculpted, lacey trunks. The trees, arranged to give the illusion of a quincrux, were heavy with flowers and laden with chandeliers. The light from their many candles receded into the opposite mirrors, which had been purposefully veiled with hanging gauze. So magical was this optical effect that the boudoir could have been mistaken for a woods, lit with the help of art."[132]

Though the boiseries fashioned by architect Jean Aubert in the Petite Singerie were more austere than the decadent examples described in said fictious interior, they similarly sought to engage with the rustic environment. This pursuit was encouraged by the three mirrors of the boudoir, which composed a material world for the Duchess de Bourbon that was marked by replicated boiseries and a refracted view of the countryside from the sole window of the space. The space's sense of surplus was only further nurtured under the hand of Huet, whose paintings inscribed life into the boiserie surrounds.

The singeries by Huet feature their own, interlayered frames, given form through the Rococo *arabesque*. Scott has noted the prevalence of said borders within Rococo panel painting, charting their development under Antoine Watteau as a modification of *grotesque* designs initiated in the late

[132]Bastide, *The Little House,* 75-76.

1600s.[133] Arabesques modified spatial distortions in decorative painting that had been encouraged by earlier artists including Claude Audran III, introducing in their place a "formal elegance" which Scott characterizes by the inclusion of solidifying pictorial frames.[134] Like the decoration of the Petite Singerie and its boiseries, such arabesques often combined architectural and natural forms.

The motif appears prominently in a singerie panel set within the spring season, in which Huet displayed two female monkeys under the branches of a cherry tree (see Figure 41). In this scene, a female monkey tugs at the fruit of a blossoming branch as she elegantly climbs a wooden ladder in heels. On the ground below, her compatriot rests against a terrace, cradling a porcelain dish filled with creamy white liquid. They are bordered by ambiguously organic architectural features which defy their own capacity to stand upright, yet support two splashing doves. A pair of porcelain vases, brimming with lush greenery, additionally frame the pictorial space.

Natural goods within this panel, coupled with their pastoral surrounds, alluded to organic initiatives that co-opted and objectified the Duchesse de Bourbon in addition to the landscape of Chantilly. Indeed, the monkey figures who elegantly rest in the spring air connoted fecundity in eighteenth-century France.[135] Savory fruits—plucked cherries, no less—frothing milk, and flitting songbirds in the painting further symbolized reproduction and fertility in this era, while also referencing gifts the Duchess had received during her wedding celebrations.[136]

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[133]Scott, *The Rococo Interior*, 152-53.

[134]Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 153.

[135]Deldicque, *La Fabrique de L'Extravagance*, 79.

[136]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 98. Notably, the pictorial counterpart of caged songbirds, which the Duchess received on her wedding day, have escaped their confines within the Petite Singerie—a trope which several eighteenth-century art historians have connected to allegories of the loss of virginity. See Robbins, *Elephant Slaves and Pampered Parrots,* 142.

As the second wife of the heirless Duc de Bourbon, Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels was tasked with the continuation of the Bourbon Condé line from the outset of their union. The importance of this role was underscored by well-wishes reported in the *Mercure de France* coverage of wedding festivities, including the following blessing from a courtier: "God grant us the grace to see [the couple] accomplished by a happy fertility."[137] The French iteration of the wedding was held within the Salon of Isis—a subsection of the larger dairy pavilion located in the menagerie at Chantilly—which was decorated with allusions to the goddess and her attribute of female fertility, symbolizing Bourbon Condé goals for the marriage.[138]

As Martin has stressed, dairies at the turn of the eighteenth-century were associated with renewal and regrowth, and their reference in the Petite Singerie merged architectural and biological initiatives.[139] In this manner, the singerie paintings created by Huet likened the Duchess de Bourbon to a structural component of dynastic lineage. This comparison was particularly salient when Huet began painting the Petite Singerie in 1735, as Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels was likely pregnant with her first child (Louis Henri, 1736-1818) at this time. Thus, the private space of the boudoir, where the Duchesse de Bourbon likely retired during her pregnancy, was marked by pictorial references to her wedding day alongside depictions of verdant landscapes that served as material reinforcements of her purpose on the Bourbon Condé estate.

While the narratives fashioned for the benefit Duchesse de Bourbon within the Petite Singerie left little room for interpretation, elder Bourbon Condé women had renegotiated the

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[137]"Dieu nous faffe la grace de les voir accompli par un heurese fecondité." Guillaume Cavalier et. al., "Août 1728," 1904.

[138]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 97-98.

[139]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 81.

gendered landscape of Rococo art by 1735. In a portrait from 1692, Anne-Louis Benedicte de Bourbon-Condé (16776-1753), the great-aunt of Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels, similarly drew upon natural bounty and architectural features (see Figure 42). Like Mademoiselle de Clermont in her later portrait at the mineral waters, the sitter of this painting arrests the gaze of the viewer. The Duchesse du Maine is backed by a lush landscape, and she emphasizes this natural setting by prominently displaying a crown of flowers to her audience. She raises these as if to set them upon her head, signaling the fertility of her mind.[140] Indeed, as an *honnête femme* who had distanced herself from the court of Louis XIV, the Duchesse du Maine was known for her support of female independence and women's' intellectualism.[141] In the painting, she is additionally flanked by a stone sphinx, alluding to the same figure of Isis appealed to in the Chantilly dairy. Yet her portrait, created by Gobert, co-opts the Egyptian goddess for separate purposes; in this case, the sitter likely hoped to affiliate herself with the deities' personification of female governance.[142] Thus, the deployment of Rococo motifs by the Duchesse du Maine emblematized modes of intellectual fruitfulness and female determination over maternal fertility.[143]

These avenues for interpretation may certainly have been open to the Duchesse de Bourbon forty years later when she entered the Petite Singerie, and archival gaps preclude any set conclusions about Caroline de Hesse Rheinfel's reading of the boudoir. Her own portrait, created by Jean-Marc Nattier, provides some elucidation in this regard. In contrast to her extended aunt and sister-in-law, the portrait of the Duchesse depicts her sequestered within an interior, as architectural surrounds

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[140]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 90.

[141]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 90.

[142]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 90-93.

[143]Martin, *Dairy Queens,* 88-91.

encompass a third of the composition (see Figure 43). Unlike her contemporaries in the Bourbon Condé line, she withdraws from the viewer's gaze, focusing on an unmarked location outside of the canvas. The harsh background and shallow recessional space of the work, coupled the framing of the sitter's body, instead directs visual focus to her stomach, which she points to as if symbolizing her central identity as a creator of Bourbon Condé children.

In this manner, the portrait of Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels blatantly aligns the Duchesse de Bourbon with the pastoralist tope of reproduction, emphasizing her morphological role in noble lineages. While it would be a disservice to assume that this reflection was not the intention of the Duchess—indeed, her portrait appears to support this representation—the identity-construction facilitated by natural motifs in the boudoir certainly implicated her in larger, familial initiatives. Just as Nattier's portrait emphasizes her lower abdomen, the mirrors of the boudoir pictorialized the body of Duchess, immersing it within a fertile material landscape. Through its incorporation of the material environment at Chantilly, the seasonal design of the Petite Singerie therefore compared the Duchesse de Bourbon to an architectural feature exemplary of dynastic power, regulating her to an objectified womb.

CONCLUSION

According to the 1762 edition of the *Dictionnaire de l'Academie Française,* the French term, *décoration*, simultaneously connoted the ornamentation of French interiors and the adornment of persons through title or status.[144] As this text has attempted to demonstrate, the decorative scheme of the Petite Singerie can be read in both manners: as an immersive singerie scheme, and a biography of its most frequent occupant, the Duchesse de Bourbon. Through its multivalent documentation of the material culture present in the larger landscape of the Chantilly estate in the eighteenth century, the boudoir created an interstitial representation of Caroline de Hesse Rheinfels, predicated on its varied usage throughout her daily life. This thesis has explored the Petite Singerie as it implicated the persona of the Duchess within various overarching narratives, including the pastoral prerogatives of the Bourbon Condé line and French negotiations with the zoological and cultural Other. It has shown that the multivalent space simultaneously represented her as an exotic pet, an imported commodity, and an objectified womb. Thus, the physical elements of the space, considered in tandem with the pictorial scenes created by artist Christophe Huet, fostered the creation of a transient and shifting identity for the Duchesse de Bourbon, which ultimately compared her to the material environment at Chantilly.

[144]As cited by Scott, *The Rococo Interior,* 7.

ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1: Image reconstruction of the *Petite Singerie*, painted by Christophe Huet from 1735-37, early eighteenth-century design. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 2: *Grande Singerie*, painted by Christophe Huet from 1737-40, early eighteenth-century design. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 3: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 4: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 5: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 6: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 7: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 8: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 9: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 10: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 11: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled Chair-Rail Panel,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 12: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Automne, Halte de Chasse,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 13: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 14: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Le Bain,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 15: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Le Jeu,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 16: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 17: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Dame á sa Toilette,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 18: *Grand Cabinet* or *Salon Chinois* at the Château du Champs-sur-Marne, painted by Christophe Huet in 1739. Château du Champs-sur-Marne, Champs-sur-Marne.

Figure 19: *Chambre de Singe* at the Hôtel de Rohan Strasbourg, painted by Christophe Huet in 1740. Hôtel de Rohan Strasbourg, Paris.

Figure 20: Claude III Audran, designs for the *Nursery of Apes,* 1709, red chalk and pencil on paper, 69.7 x 49.5 cm. Nationalmuseum, Stockholm.

Figure 21: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie: Plafond*, 1735-37, Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 22: Central looking glass in the *Petite Singerie*, which displays a window and balcony on the external wall of the boudoir, early eighteenth-century design. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 23: Christophe Huet, *Petite Singerie*: *Door Leaves*, 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 24: One wall of the *Petite Singerie*, featuring a mirror hung parallel to its paneled paintings, early eighteenth-century design. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 25: *Petite Singerie*, featuring a large mirror that is centered in the space, early eighteenth-century design. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 26: Pierre Gobert, *Maria Anna of Bourbon With Baby Trained Monkey*, ca.1662-1744, color illustration, 15.5 x 21 cm. UW-Madison Libraries, Madison. Original at The Art Archive/Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence.

Figure 27: *Outfit for a Monkey*, *French,* eighteenth century, silk taffeta, 44 x 1.15 cm. Musée de la Mode et du Textile, Paris.

Figure 28: Comte du Buffon et. al, *La sai a gorge blanche,* 1767, print, from the *Histoire Naturelle*, vol. 15, plate 9. Department of Special Collections at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison.

Figure 29: Hugh Douglas Hamilton, *Portrait of a 'Marmozet,'* c. 1767.

Figure 30: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Le Jeu,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

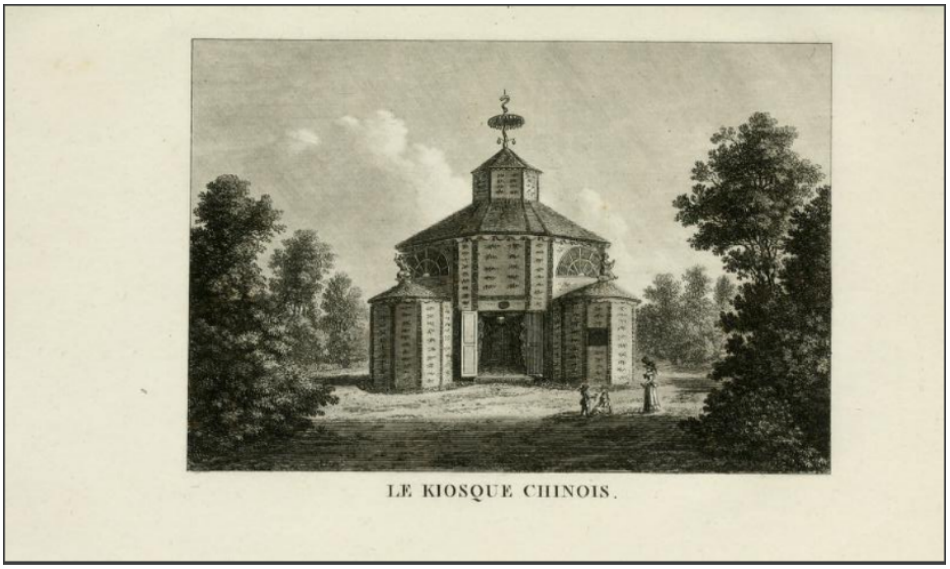

Figure 31: Mèrigot et Desenne*, Le Kiosque Chinois*, 1755, engraving, from the *Promenades ou Itinéraire des jardins de Chantilly , orné d'un plan et de vingt estampes qui en représentent les principales vues, dessinées et gravées*. Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris.

Figure 32: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Dame á sa Toilette,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 33: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Le Bain,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 34: Anne Claude Philippe, Comte de Caylus, after François Boucher, *Á La Pagode,* 1740, etching, 27.9 x 18.5 cm. Bibliothéque nationale de France, Paris.

Figure 35: Unknown artist, *Still Life of Porcelain Vessels with Monkey and Birds,* ca. 1725-30, oil on canvas, 105 x 139 cm. Musée des arts décoratifs, Paris.

Figure 36: Christophe Huet, detail, *Grande Singerie*: *L'Allégorie du L'Afrique du Nord,* 1737-40. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 37: Pierre Gobert, *Portrait of Marie Anne de Bourbon, Duchesse de Bourbon,* ca. 1710, oil on canvas, 135.8 x 120 cm, Château de Versailles et de Trianon, Versailles.

Figure 38: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Automne, Halte de Chasse,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 39: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 40: Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait de Madame de Clermont aux eaux minérales de Chantilly*, 1729, oil on canvas, 195 x 161 cm. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 41: Christophe Huet, detail, *Petite Singerie*: *Untitled,* 1735-37. Musée Condé, Chantilly.

Figure 42: Pierre Gobert, *Portrait of Anne-Louis Benedicte de Bourbon-Condé, Duchesse du Maine*, 1692, oil on canvas, 103.5 x 71.5 cm. Musée de l'Ile de France, Sceaux.

Figure 43: Jean-Marc Nattier, *Portrait of Princess Caroline de Hesse-Rheinfels-Rotenburg, Princess de Condé*, first half of eighteenth-century (circa 1728-1740), oil on canvas, 138 x 105 cm. Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, Buenos Artes.

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